

**BRIEFING NOTE**

# Providing evidence to improve training policies

## Cedefop's achievements in 2010 and plans for 2011

'On the basis of eight years of European cooperation, we have defined the long-term strategic objectives [for vocational education and training (VET)] for the next decade,' – the Bruges communiqué of the European Ministers responsible for VET in 33 countries, the European Commission and the European social partners of 7 December 2010.

### A word about Cedefop

Cedefop is the EU's agency to support European VET development. For 2009-11, Cedefop's strategic objective is to 'contribute to excellence in VET and strengthen European cooperation in developing, implementing and evaluating European VET policy'. Its strategic objective is supported by four priorities:

- informing European VET policies;
- interpreting European trends in and challenges for skills, competences and learning;
- assessing VET's benefits;
- raising the profile of VET.

Cedefop works to strengthen European cooperation in VET, by using its expertise in research, policy analysis and networking. It disseminates information through its website, publications, study visits, conferences and seminars to decision-makers in European institutions, Member States and the social partners.

Cedefop's **VET policy report**, *A bridge to the future*, presented at the meeting, reviews and summarises the progress of participating countries <sup>(1)</sup> in implementing commonly agreed priorities, instruments and principles between 2002 and 2010 and identifies the major challenges. Its findings will be debated more widely by senior policy-makers in 2011.

Cedefop's 2010 policy report at Bruges was its fourth. Earlier reports were presented at similar meetings in Maastricht (in 2004), Helsinki (2006) and Bordeaux (2008). The reports are just one of the ways in which Cedefop's evidence and expertise help to develop European VET policy. At Bruges, Cedefop was invited to continue to report on progress every three years.

Read the report:

*A bridge to the future. European policy for vocational education and training 2002-10.*

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3058\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3058_en.pdf)



The Council and European Commission entrusted Cedefop with several important tasks in recent years. These include providing and regularly updating European skill demand and supply forecasts, working with the European Commission and Member States to develop common European tools and principles to improve VET and lifelong learning, monitoring implementation of the European qualifications framework and European credit system for VET, and developing and hosting the Europass website.

Consequently, Cedefop's work has contributed substantially to developing European VET policy and has provided evidence underlying the new EU policy framework, and *Europe 2020* <sup>(2)</sup> strategy. Frequent citations of Cedefop's work in EU VET policy documents reflect its relevance and quality <sup>(3)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> The 27 EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; and EU candidate countries, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

<sup>(2)</sup> *Europe 2020: a new European strategy for jobs and growth*. Available from Internet:

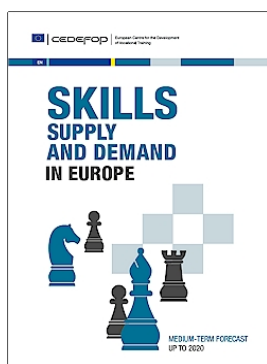
[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/president/news/documents/pdf/20100303\\_1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/documents/pdf/20100303_1_en.pdf)

<sup>(3)</sup> In 2010, Cedefop has been cited in 85 policy documents.

## Supporting new skills for new jobs

Cedefop's skill forecasts, analyses of changing skill needs and matching of skill demand and supply were used in the European Commission's communication *New Skills for New Jobs* and will support Europe 2020's new skills for new jobs flagship initiative.

In 2010, Cedefop published **skill supply and demand forecasts** for the European labour market for 2020. Taking into account the economic crisis, the forecast is that about seven million additional jobs will be created by then. More important than the numbers are the trends. Most new jobs will be skill-intensive requiring high levels of qualification, but jobs at all levels, including elementary occupations will demand higher skills. Most job opportunities (newly created jobs and vacancies due to people retiring), will require medium-level qualifications, many of which are vocational.



Read the report:  
*Skills supply and demand in Europe: medium-term forecast up to 2020.*  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/15540.aspx>

The findings of Cedefop's skill forecasts were widely discussed in 2010, for example at a European Parliament workshop *Skills and competences to overcome the crisis* in March and at the Spanish Presidency conference *New skills and new jobs for a more competitive Europe* in April.

Cedefop's work on different forms of **skill mismatch** developed well in 2010 and will continue in 2011. Despite high unemployment skill shortages exist and mismatch affects different people including ageing workers and low-qualified people. A particularly urgent problem is high youth unemployment and most solutions will include VET measures.

Cedefop's study on **green skills for green jobs** was discussed at an International Labour Organisation workshop and at the Belgian Presidency conference on green development, on 28 September, and at a European Parliament workshop, *Learning to be green*

on 29 September 2010. In 2011, Cedefop will examine further current and future skill needs of a greener economy.

Read the report  
*Skills for green jobs: European synthesis report*  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/16439.aspx>



## Developing and implementing common European tools

Common European tools in VET, developed in recent years, improve understanding of qualifications and skills. They support the *Europe 2020* flagship initiative youth on the move, as well as transparency and mobility and help learners to move between different parts of national education and training systems.

Following European Parliament and Council recommendations on the **European qualifications framework** (EQF) in 2008 and the **European credit system for VET** (ECVET) and the **European quality assurance framework** for VET in 2009, Cedefop is supporting implementation of these tools in Member States through comparative analyses, systematic monitoring of developments at national and sectoral level and technical advice. In 2010, Cedefop participated in more than 50 meetings on developing and implementing the European tools. They are a key feature of the European Commission's communication *A new impetus for VET* <sup>(4)</sup>. This work will continue in 2011 and beyond. Cedefop is working with the Hungarian Presidency on a conference on the European and national qualification frameworks which has been scheduled for May 2011. Cedefop has also published a working paper *The development of ECVET in Europe* which analyses the progress by the Member States in and strategies for preparing to implement ECVET.

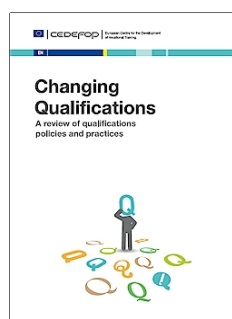
<sup>(4)</sup> *A new impetus for VET*: Available from Internet  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0296:FIN:EN:PDF>

As shown by Cedefop's 2010 publication *The development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe*, national qualification frameworks (NQFs) are, in some cases, redefining how different parts of the national education and training system, for example VET and higher education, relate to each other. Cedefop's 2010 publication *Linking credit systems and qualifications frameworks* showed how NQFs have stimulated debate in Member States on the relationship between **VET and higher education**.

**Europass**, available in 26 languages, supports job and geographical mobility and enables people to present qualifications and skills in a standard format, which also helps of employers. Cedefop contributed to the design and development of the five Europass instruments and manages the Europass website (<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu>). More than 10 million Europass CVs have been completed online since the website's launch in February 2005. Europass has become a widely accepted tool which has demonstrated its value to learners, workers and citizens across Europe, surpassing all expectations.

## Qualifications for lifelong learning

European tools are based on the **learning outcomes approach**. They reflect what an individual learner is able to do and understand at the end of a learning process. Building on previous work, Cedefop's 2010 major study on *Changing qualifications – A review of qualifications policies and practices* examines how the role and functions of qualifications are changing Europe, outlines possible scenarios for developments in the next ten years and identifies the cornerstones for a reform strategy.



Read the report  
*Changing qualifications – a review of qualifications policies and practices*  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/17429.aspx>

Cedefop's 2010 study *Learning outcomes in VET curricula* looks at the relationship between curricula and learning outcomes in nine EU countries. More countries will be studied in 2011.

Cedefop provided background information and expertise for the Spanish Presidency conference *The value of competences in VET* in May 2010, which looked at issues such as relationships between learning outcomes and qualifications, and changes in lifelong guidance. In support of Council resolutions from 2004 and 2008 on **lifelong guidance**, Cedefop will publish, in 2011, a lifelong guidance policy review, highlighting Member States' progress in developing guidance policies, systems and practices.

Improvements in VET will not succeed without the support of well-trained **VET teachers and trainers**. Cedefop's 2010 study on *Professional development opportunities for in-company trainers* outlined initiatives to recognise training of in-company trainers in 13 countries. In 2011, Cedefop will continue to work closely with the European Commission to monitor developments affecting trainer's roles and competences.

The economic crisis increased interest in **validating** competences acquired through **non-formal and informal learning**. Public authorities, employers and employees see a need for practical and cost-efficient ways to recognise all of the skills and competences available. Cedefop publications on validating non-formal and informal learning were downloaded over 7 500 times in 2010. In 2011, a recommendation on validating non-formal and informal learning, based largely on evidence provided by Cedefop, will stimulate further analyses. More specifically, Cedefop will examine the role of validation in enterprises.

To follow up Council conclusions and the European Commission's action plan on European **adult learning**, Cedefop is examining strategies and policies to increase access to workplace learning. In 2010, Cedefop reviewed adult learning at the workplace. In 2011, Cedefop will disseminate its report *Learning while working* which looks at successes, problems and areas for further development. Given demographic change adult learning has become an important issue.

To promote policy developments, peer learning and exchanges of information Cedefop continued to coordinate **study visits**, which are part of the EU's lifelong learning programme. In the academic year 2009/10, there were 230 study visits with 2 360 education and training specialists participating. Cedefop has been encouraging social partners to

participate in study visits and monitors and evaluates the impact of study visits on participants. This work will continue in 2011.

## Assessing vocational education and training's benefits

Cedefop research on the **economic and social benefits of VET** progressed in 2010 and will be published in 2011. A clearer understanding of VET's contribution to job prospects, productivity, competitiveness and social inclusion can inform investment decisions about VET. In 2011, the results will support debate and decisions on public expenditure priorities. In this context work on financing schemes and incentives to invest in VET will continue.

To follow-up one of the Bruges Communiqué's short-term objectives, Cedefop will support the European Commission to define more clearly and understand better the attractiveness of VET.

Cedefop's role in ongoing international work to **improve VET statistics**, endorsed by Council conclusions in 2008, will continue in 2011. Cedefop contributes to improving statistics at European and international levels to improve the relevance and quality of data as well as methods and tools for their collection. In particular, Cedefop has contributed to developing an employability indicator and will support the European Commission in designing a mobility indicator for learners in VET in 2011.

## Adding value

Cedefop aims to add value through readily accessible, accurate and timely information on VET in various formats to meet the needs of different users. Part of Cedefop's mission to raise the visibility of VET and awareness of VET related issues.

In 2010, more than 454 000 files were downloaded from Cedefop's **web portal** ([www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)), almost 340 000 of which were publications. These included around 27 000 Cedefop briefing notes. Available in several languages and linked to Cedefop's press releases, they keep policy-makers informed of major VET developments. Cedefop has the most comprehensive online VET bibliographical database in Europe. Around 50 000 visits were recorded in 2010.

## Cedefop – an efficient and well managed European agency

Cedefop was one of the first European organisations to implement activity-based budgeting. In 2010, Cedefop put into operation its performance measurement system (PMS). The PMS strengthens planning and reporting and ensures that activities, priorities and objectives are aligned. It assesses systematically and regularly Cedefop's outputs, outcomes and impact.

In 2010, Cedefop's budget execution was, again, around 97%. Continuous improvement of Cedefop's management and administration is well reflected in audit reports, which confirmed the compliance and regularity of operations and that the organisation is working well. Audit recommendations are followed up as a means for further improvement and development.

Cedefop's expertise in 2010 was widely used to support and help develop the European VET agenda. Cedefop's work programme for 2011 has been carefully planned with its Governing Board, including Member State's governments, the European Commission and the Social Partners to ensure that the organisation continues to provide the expertise and information they need.

In 2011, Cedefop will agree new medium-term priorities for 2012-2014 with its Governing Board. They will reflect the priorities as laid out in the new policy framework and, thus, address the challenges facing VET and provide the basis of Cedefop's future work programmes.



Briefing note – 9043 EN

Cat.No: TI-BB-10-016-EN-N

© European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2011  
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Briefing notes are published in German, Greek, English, Spanish, French and Italian. To receive them regularly e-mail us at:  
[briefingnotes@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:briefingnotes@cedefop.europa.eu)

Other briefing notes and Cedefop publications are at:  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications.aspx>

P.O Box 22427, 55102 Thessaloniki, GREECE  
Europe 123, Thessaloniki, GREECE  
Tel. +30 2310490111, Fax +30 2310490020  
E-mail: [info@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:info@cedefop.europa.eu)

visit our portal [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)